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Please amend claim no. 3.

1. A method for automatic distribution of packages (2), such as parcels, small packets and the like, to the recipient (9), characterized by the steps:
  - delivering or sending a package notification card (10) with a machine-readable identification (ID) number (21) to the recipient (9) and applying the same ID number (21) to the package (2),
  - reading this ID number (21) applied to the package (2) and storing the package (2) in an automatic storage facility under this ID number (21),
  - inputting of the package notification card (10) by the recipient (9) into an automatic distribution reader (11) for the machine-readable ID number (21),
  - automatically retrieving the package (2) from the storage facility, transporting the package (2) to a closeable distribution station, opening the station on the basis of the ID number (21) read from the package notification card (10) and closing the station after the removal of the package (2).

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2. The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that as an additional distribution condition, personal identification features are recorded and/or automatically read and stored.

--3.(Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the package notification card (10) is provided with a distribution date and time imprint after package distribution has taken place, and is retained.--

4. The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that before the storage of the package (2) for

distribution to the recipient (9), a machine-readable input code produced during the dispatch of the package (2) and

applied to the package (2) is read, and the distribution of the package (2) to the recipient (9) and, if required, additionally the storage with the input code and distribution or storage date and time, is transmitted to a central facility for package tracking and distribution status reporting.

5. The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that in the case of a collect-on-delivery mailing to be paid by the recipient (9), a machine-readable input code is applied to the package (2) during the dispatch containing the payment condition and the amount to be paid, in that before the package (2) is stored for distribution to the recipient (9), the machine-readable input code is additionally read, and the distribution of the package (2) to the recipient (9) is carried out only after the payment of the amount at the distribution station.

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6. The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the reading of the ID number (21) applied to the package (2) and, optionally, of the input code is carried out before the storage, using a handheld scanner.
7. A device for automatic distribution of packages (2), such as parcels, small packets or the like, to the recipient (9), characterized by:
  - an input reader (5) for reading a machine-readable ID number (21) applied to the package (2) and, coupled thereto, an automatic storage facility for storing the respective package (2) under this ID number (21),
  - a distribution reader (11) for reading the same ID number (21) on a package notification card (10) and, coupled thereto, the automatic storage

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facility for retrieving the package (2) with this ID number (21) and

- transport means for transporting the retrieved packages (2) to a closeable distribution station which

8. The device as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that means (12) for reading and/or recording personal identification features are provided, and distribution is carried out only after a reading and/or recording process has been carried out.
9. The device as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that a printer (13) is provided to print distribution date and time on the package notification card (10), and also a store for the parcel notification cards (10).
10. The device as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the input reader (5) or an additional reader is constructed in such a way that it reads machine-readable input codes located on the packages (10) and, when the respective package (2) is distributed, this input code, together with distribution date and time, can be transmitted to a central facility for package tracking and distribution status reporting.
11. The device as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that a payment device is provided at the distribution station, and the package (2) can be distributed only when the amount has been paid in in cash or in a cash-free manner, said amount, together with a payment condition, having been read in the input code by the input reader (5) or an additional reader.